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ABSTRACT

The current strategy for Brazil's development does not focus on traditional advantages such as cheap and unskilled labor and inexpensive raw materials. The Brazilian government proposes an emphasis on vocational training and rehabilitation of human resources and on research and development. Vocational training has traditionally been offered by SENAI (National Service of Industrial Apprenticeship) and SENAC (National Service of Commercial Apprenticeship). The union movement sees vocational training as being fundamentally a state obligation. Trade unions are linked to different political and ideological lines, and union centers offer political education. The two oldest centers, CUT (Confederation of Workers) and CGT (Workers' Unique Center), have specific projects that train union leaders and strengthen democratic, class conscience, and independent unionism. Three unions--CUT, CGT, and the Union Force--would be willing to invest in vocational training on two conditions: that they could obtain resources for their objectives and that the political dimension would be linked to the technical dimension. In the last 20 years, some vocational training initiatives developed by segments of the working classes have been shown to be more significant than those of workers' organizations. They seem more important than union initiatives primarily because they introduce more advanced activities and train the worker as a whole. (10 references) (YLB)

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The union movement and vocational training in Brazil

by Carlos Roberto Horta and
Ricardo Augusto Alves de Carvalho

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Training Policies Branch
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Introduction

This paper will present the position of the Brazilian union movement in regard to vocational training. It was conceived by means of inter-institutional contacts between NESTH - Núcleo de Estudos sobre o Trabalho Humano da UFMG - Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (Human Labour Studies Centre of UFMG - Federal University of Minas Gerais) and the ILO - International Labour Office through the Training Policies Branch.

The ILO suggested that we use several analysis indicators to investigate the means, ways, manners and prospects of vocational training from the union movement's point of view. These questions are as follows:

"Are Brazilian unions reluctant to support vocational training? Have they made any efforts to support it? Which? Have these efforts been successful or not? Why? What prerequisites would be necessary to help the unions be more successful? Are there any changes going on in Brazil which will make it easier or more difficult for unions to support vocational training? Are the unions themselves providing vocational training? Why? Are their courses competitive?"

The vast extent of Brazilian territory is reflected in the immense country-wide network of trade unions, which are linked to different political and ideological lines. In this sense and as a methodological resource, as well as a primary source of data, we chose three Brazilian institutional union centres, (CUT, CGT and FORÇA SINDICAL). These comprise the great majority of Brazilian workers who belong to workers' organisations: CUT - Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (Unique Centre of Workers)/ CGT - Confederaçao Geral dos Trabalhadores (General Confederation of Workers) / FORÇA SINDICAL (UNION FORCE).

We selected these sources of data to give universal representation of the thinking and action of the Brazilian union movement.

It is necessary, therefore, to present an abridged report of the history of these centres.

In August, 1981, while still under the military government, the 1ª Conferência Nacional da Classe Trabalhadora - 1ª CONCLAT (1st National Conference of the Working Class) took place in Brazil. It united more than six thousand delegates representing workers from all over the country with an original goal of confrontation with the dictatorial government.

However, the good relationship between various union factions began to deteriorate seriously and, in 1983, a significant part of the movement was joined to CUT. The other forces remained at CONCLAT and afterwards at Central Geral dos Trabalhadores (General Centre of Workers). In 1989, there was a new division, with the CGT emerging, at that time headed by today's Brazilian Minister of Labour.

In May, 1991, with a speech against the "unionism of confrontation", one more faction of the Brazilian union movement emerged: FORÇA SINDICAL.

These three big workers' organisations indicate having about 5,000 institutes and 35,000,000 workers.

As we have stated, our research methodology consisted primarily of guided interviews with the main representatives of the training area, as well as specific individuals in the workers' organisations, that is all the national executive members from each organisation.

Our secondary source of data was based on reviewing official documents from these institutions, as well as the major Brazilian newspapers.

To be concise, we have tried to make an objective analysis of what we could classify as:

- Today's position in face of the vocational training issue;

- Problems that were faced (deadlocks/difficulties);

- Prospects.

As researchers, we have been critically vivilant of our partisan and ideological positions, to avoid the "interference" of personal political views.

As a general outline, this article has the following structure:

I. A description of the political and economic attitudes of the Brazilian government towards today's process of industrial technological modernisation.

II. Vocational training conducted by the government and entrepreneurs of the Union Movement in Brazil.

III. Union training in Brazil - the political dimension.

IV. Vocational training in the Brazilian union movement - from the technical dimension to the political-technical dimension.

V. "Alternative" organisation (non-union/non-governmental/ entrepreneurial) of vocational training.

VI. Conclusion.

As acknowledgement, we would like to thank the ILO for instigating the opportunity to systematise and deepen reflections shared by us in the NESTH field, and, in a general way, the Brazilian workers, represented by CUT, CGT, FORÇA SINDICAL. The volume of the collected data testifies how much we owe to those who co-operated with us in the production of this paper.

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I. The current political and economic situation

Today's strategy for Brazilian development, supported by industrial modernisation, aims at increasing levels of competitiveness in the national market and ultimately to form one of the advanced economies of the world. New methods of production management and entrepreneurial administration have to be found, both for the domestic and to meet the standards of the international market.

This philosophy based on "quality and productivity" is in the essence of a new international order where we identify the USA, the Unified Europe, the Asiatic Tigers and Japan as leaders. In this context, international competition based on technological terms is characterised by the relationship among the new economic blocks, as well as by the recent orientation of resources to Eastern Europe.

This scenario eliminates traditional advantages in countries like Brazil which are based on using of abundant factors of production, such as cheap and unskilled labour and inexpensive raw materials.

II. Vocational training by the Government and employers

To overcome this drepressing situation, the Brazilian government proposes that the emphasis should be on the training and rehabilitation of human resources and on research and development. It is necessary to stimulate and develop the vocational training services, which are traditionally offered by SENAI (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial - National Service of Industrial Apprenticeship) and SENAC (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial - National Service of Commercial Apprenticeship). SENAI and SENAC are responsible, at the entrepreneurial and governmental level, for vocational training in Brazil. It is also necessary to increase investment in research and development, which now represents 0.5 per cent of gross national product, while in Japan this same rate reaches 3.0 per cent.

Still, according to the productivity and quality programme, an important objective is promoting professional and technical associations aimed at teacher training.

This brief introduction aims at presenting the Brazilian productivity issue and political and strategical mechanisms. Vocational training and the rehabilitation of human resources are presented as fundamental ways of changing Brazil's present stage of development.

Before we consider this paper's object of study, we raise our first assumption: that vocational training in Brazil is conducted primarily by the employers, stimulated by government programmes and developed without any relationship with workers' organisations. Responsibility for vocational training in Brazil is given to SENAI and SENAC, and students either voluntarily attend these institutes or are sent there by enterprises. SENAI is the only institute in Brazil that functions at the elementary school level, acting in vocational training and retraining. SENAI and SENAC were created by decree-law No. 4048 of 22 January 1942. Among its objectives, were the development of apprenticeship in schools, to help enterprises where apprenticeship is available at the working place, collaborate in the preparation and training of industrial foremen and promote courses, seminars and lectures of immediate interest to the industry.

Besides this form of training, which we could classify as a consortium between employers and the government, private entrepreneurial initiative[1] promotes courses and training in vocational schools, such as the FIAT school. Recycling the labour force in the face of introducing new technologies and transformations in the production process are also considered. This is the case of the introduction of innovations such as Quality Control Circles and "Just in Time" planning. These are, however, but nascent since there are only 5,000 numeric command machines and 150 robots (concentrated in the automobile industry) in the country.

In order to talk about vocational training in Brazil, we have to mention some aspects of the educational system:

Brazil has an estimated population of 138,500,000, and of these 31,419,000 are illiterate. Calculated according to the adult population and considering the economically active population), this represents an illiteracy rate of about 30 per cent. We also have to consider that only 12 per cent of Brazilian children can finish elementary school (up to the 8th grade - equivalent to the first year of a US High School), which is public and free, precarious and insufficient.

Before the 80's, the political and institutional limits faced by workers' organisations in Brazil (they had to be linked to the State) inhibited any political education or vocational training of workers.

In the 80's, with increased political freedom, values such as autonomy and freedom were introduced as preponderant issues in the union movement. Training which was legitimised by a political-educational dimension was based on the worker's knowledge about his/her own work.

In the 90's technical and vocational knowledge are not yet a matter of importance to workers' organisations. The main strategy is one of using training as a means to develop the political organisation of the unions. The building of union schools is planned, where the aim is to "train union leaders and workers to transform individuals entering the working world, while the Capital and the State already achieve that in their schools and through legislation"[2].

III. Unions and workers' education

The emphasis on vocational training is a recent matter and is seen by the union movement as being fundamentally a State obligation. In relation to the union and political education, the oldest union centres CUT and the CGT, have specific projects.

CUT is responsible for the vocational schools, which are autonomous institutes of education, study and research, generally structured in departments responsible for training programmes. The aim is to train union leaders and strenghten democratic, class conscience, unitary and independent unionism.

They are: - Escola Sindical 7 de Outubro (7th of October Union School), in the industrial zone of Belo Horizonte. - Escola CAJAMAR (CAJAMAR School), in São Paulo. - Quilombo dos Palmares, in the northeast region of the country, in Recife, Pernambuco.

There are two other union schools which are just about to be implemented: one in the north of Brazil, in Pará state, and the other in the southern region, in Santa Catarina state.

These schools have agreements with the University, research and consulting centres, international organisations such as the Italian Metallurgist Federation and the Latin American Institute of Economic and Social Development.

The programmes which are now being developed are about union practice; collective bargaining, training instructors and educators (teaching methodologies and research); union planning and administration; unionism; and labour process.

The students are generally selected by unions. The majority of the educational staff originate from political union organisations.

According to the person responsible for the CUT's training at a national level, this work "has strategical importance to the future for the working class".

The CGT, through the INAFOR (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Formaçao Sindical - National Institute of Studies and Union Training) has the following general programme content: organisation of the institute itself, development of capability to conduct and guide groups and the development of knowledge and experience required to analyse the present issue. They aim at multiplying "explanation" leadership through knowledge of Brazilian union organisation, collective bargaining, strikes, entrepreneurial context, the economic situation, legal and institutional aspects of the legislation, etc.

In its training activities, the CGT co-operates with the following institutes:

- Tripartite Technical Committees of the ILO (International Labour Office)
- International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin.
- Instituto Americano para o Desenvolvimento do Sindicalismo (American Institute for the Development of the Unionism - IADSL)
- The Central Sindical Israelense (Israeli Union Centre) - HISTRADUT.
- The Central Latino-Americana dos Trabalhadores (Latin American Centre of Workers) - CLAT.
- The Centro de Estudos de Trabalho (Centre of Work Studies) - CET, in São Paulo.

The technical staff of educators and instructors is formed by assistants of the CGT and others who are locally recruited. The teaching body of the CET is also used. They stress that selecting participants for the programmes must be judicious and carefully done, obeying the following measures: affiliation to the organisation's union centre and vocation, whose evaluation is done by the regional centres that nominate the candidate.

IV. Unions' attitude towards vocational training as a political instrument

A.The CGT (Confederation of Workers) position

This confederation, created in 1986, represents what is called today "unionism of results", and claims to comprise eight million workers, distributed throughout 1,600 unions. Vocational training is seen as being of strategical importance, depending on an institutional framework which is the INAFOR. Fundamentally, they teach basic knowledge about the union, the organisation and union practices, that is, political and ideological content.

For the directors of the CGT not only is the professional dimension of vocational training desirable, but they also co-operate with the Federal Government to secure financial resources for training. They are critical of the vocational training done by the government/entrepreneurs through the national services of industrial and commercial apprenticeship (SENAI, SENAC). The CGT points out that these institutions receive substantial financial resources from social welfare, yet workers do not have a seat on the executive boards of these institutes. According to a representative of the CGT: "We have the right to get into this field. We have the right to be a workers' representative on the executive boards of SENAI and SENAC; we haven't conquered this right yet due to the employers' reticence". The CGT also stresses that vocational training, from this council's point of view, only "serves the employers' interests" and affirms that a lack of initiative from the union movement may also be responsible for this situation.

The CUT proposes the creation of tripartite vocational training commissions (Government - entrepreneurs - workers), as well as participation in SENAI and SENAC.

The CGT is just about to sign an agreement with the Minister of Education to obtain resources designated for vocational training, and to give instructions in reading and writing. This agreement is supported by a project developed between the Centre and the Technical Assistance Department of the Ministry of Education.

According to the CGT, technical and professional competence is an ingredient of political education: once a better qualified worker is more conscious of his/her rights, he/she can claim them, declaring "the right to a better life".

This agreement[3] with the Ministry of Education is for approximately US$1,250,000.00. Vocational training is a priority for this union, among whose other goals are helping the workers to become literate, teaching them thermal principles and giving them a political education. As a political strategy, the union intends to train technical union staff to manage projects.

Nowadays, the number of unions affiliated to the CGT is not significant. The CGT supports courses for vocational training with its own resources. The courses on sewing and tailoring in Minas Gerais (southern region of Brazil) are mentioned as an example of a successful experiment. In these courses, the instructors are union directors with experience in the technical area concerned. The represenative of the CGT informed us that these courses do not involve a political dimension. On the other hand, courses given by INAFOR are purely political in content and do not involve any form of vocational training. According to the CGT, the courses to be given through the agreement with the Ministry of Education should include not only a political dimension, but technical and vocational training as well. In July 1991 in

Maranhão state, in the northeastern region of Brazil, the construction industry union also signed an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, whose minister has been a CGT president. In Porto Alegre, the construction industry union has an ample vocational training programme.

The CGT considers vocational training necessary in view of the market's having opened to foreign capital, and the increasingly fast introduction of new technologies and organisational innovations. This centre's evaluation report has stated that vocational training and college education are strongly related to the development of markets and salaries. In other words, without investment in education, there is no development.

The State and the union movement are seen to be responsible for vocational training: "we can't leave everything in charge of the State".

According to theCGT, vocational training also brings the worker closer to the union, since he/she would have more "awareness of his/her strength" and would increase his/her bargaining power, which could change the profile of income distribution in Brazil. The unions point out that the government and also from the private sector do not use their resources for education and training, as these are not considered to be priorities.

The CGT intends to establish agreements with union centres from other countries, such as the USA and Mexico, as well as Europe (especially Italy and Germany), on the level of political union and vocational and technical training.

This union confederation considers that such a movement will stimulate vocational training, as vocational training is a matter of necessity to both the State and private sector. It is also fundamental to workers who must increase their value to the labour force.

B. The UNION FORCE (FORÇA SINDICAL) position

The UNION FORCE, created in February 1991, signed an agreement with the UIL[4] for approximately US$2,400,000.00 and was given a period of three years to finish a project for workers' education and vocational training. This union centre will provide the physical and service infrastructure. For this to be done, a vocational training school will be built in São Paulo ,the largest Brazilian city with the biggest industrial concentration of workers. There is also an intention to build schools such as those in other Brazilian states.

This project aims at combining political education with vocational training: "let's work with our hands, as well as with our brains (...) let's make people conscious; it's not a doctrinal consciousness, but a working consciousness of production issues". The representative of UNION FORCE points out that vocational training on the part of the union movement is different from vocational training conducted by employers. According to the representative, where technical and psychological preparation are given prior to entering the plant, as in the union movement, the worker starts working in the plant already conscious of his rights.

The covenant of the Metallurgist Union in São Paulo[5] with the government, through the Ministry of Education, has resulted in an agreed amount of US$1,250,000.00. This covenant involves a project to finance a headquarters-school where all union activities will be centralised in a building of 17 floors, designed for vocational and workers' education training. According to the union's representative: "to train a skilled worker (...), it is not enough for him to be a good turner if he is completely alienated from political discussions, economic issues for important issues in his country that also affect the worker (...) technical and political staff must be prepared to enter factories and organise other workers."

According to UNION FORCE, they see the matter of vocational training in a larger

perspective, associated with the quality of life and citizenship.

Members of the UF point out the matter of resources for vocational training as the greatest obstacle. They mention, for instance, that they have even been offered machines by entrepreneurs (industrial manufacturers), but there is nowhere to put them. Some enterprises have even offered machines that would be used for apprenticeship inside the factory. However, accepting such machines would be contrary to legislation that determines contractual obligations for any activity developed inside a factory. There are some examples of informal training where the foreman is the instructor in his spare time.

A goal of the UF would be to obtain resources through international agreements and with the Federal Government itself. The UF assumes that the Government would be able to provide vocational training schools where unions could offer their opinions and follow the courses. Due to the lack of resoruces, this proposal is now being made. According to UNION FORCE, even international agreements and those established with the Government itself woud not contain conditions to support the creation and maintenance of schools all over the country. It has been agreed they believe, to build one school in Minas Gerais state (second Brazilian industrial pole) and another in São Paulo.

Besides these projects, the greatest priority of UNION FORCE is the wage issue: "Better salaries determine better conditions of life". UNION FORCE believes that workers with technical qualifications can receive better salaries, and their risks of being dismissed will be reduced. However, technical and vocational training is not the union's main responsibility, as there are not sufficient resources to implement them.

The UF believes that, nowadays in Brazil, the Centros Integrados de Educação - CIACS (Integrated Centres of Education), a governmental project, can provide an effective integral training. Students receive their education along with vocational activities.

The UF is in favour of "unleashing" unions from the State, with the union tax. In the past the Ministry of Labour shared the resources and kept part of it. With the termination of the union tax the most important issue for discussion is that financial support to the unions should be given by the workers themselves, freely and spontaneously. On the other hand, unions should have a competitive management that knows how to allocate its resources. Unions are now supported by monthly payments made by workers and union contributions.

Vocational training is seen as a government responsibility, whose projects should involve the union movement.

UNION FORCE speaks for 1,700 institutes, including unions, associations and confederations. They mention that the experience of affiliated unions which provide vocational courses (apart from political education) is at an early stage and the results are not as yet evident. As examples of this situation, there are the courses on tailoring and sewing ("clothing" industry union), on turning, on mechanics and on how to become a locksmith (mainly in São Paulo, in the metalworking industry).

C. The CUT (Workers' Unique Centre) position

The CUT Foundation Congress took place on 28 August 1983 in São Bernardo do Campo - São Paulo state - in the presence of 5,050 delegates from all over the country. From its foundation to its third congress, in Belo Horizonte during 1988, the union's concept and practice for this centre has been defined as follows: CUT is a unitary and class conscious workers' organisation struggling for the immediate and historical objectives of the workers, fighting for the politics of class collaboration, and trying to provide instruments for the struggle between capital and labour. The class con-

scious and autonomous unionism that CUT tries to develop is based on reformist unionism and class conciliation, which transforms the strikes into an objective for themselves, without achieving social transformation. Also it aims at abandoning "vanguard" unionism, which cannot reach the great "masses". The idea of autonomy, as a political principle which guides CUT, means that the union should not belong to any party line and should establish a policy of performance in the name of the working class.

The unions affiliated to the CUT claim to represent 15 million workers. Until the third congress, vocational training did not catch CUT directors' attention, although it was discussed by groups of workers in the congress. After an accelerated period of development, the great internal debate in the union centre was intensified on the issue of union concepts and practices. The debate progressed in an unbalanced way. CUT takes political and workers' education in a strict sense. It is well developed as far as training for leadership is concerned, but has not developed views on educational or training issues.[6]

According to the statements from a person responsible for CUT Union Training, a shortage of resources defines the priorities. And, at this moment, the priority is the training of leaders, who take responsibility for decisions. According to his words, "they are workers who have just left the factory or the country, where they were planting their crops in a primitive way, and start directing a workers' organisation, having to decide on the best use for union funds." Unfortunately, the CUT does not yet work with vocational training in the sense of factory work, for example, but is concerned about the vocational training of union leaders: "I'll teach the union director how to use arithmetic in the calculation of inflation losses and something about Brazilian legislation. I might as well call this vocational training for union directors." The Training Secretariat of CUT does not believe that there can be political education without technical training as well.

On the other hand, from the idea that a good quality technical environment will create conditions for workers to become politically more conscious, members of CUT's workers' education section have been thinking of vocational training as a means to fortify workers politically. Discussions have been held to establish the organisation of upgrading courses which foresee the use of new technologies to help workers feel secure when facing the introduction of such new technologies. An example of technical training implemented in workers' organisations affiliated to CUT is the Metallurgist Union in Betim-MG where, from 1982 to 1989, there were vocational courses supported by the union itself. These were terminated due to the lack of financial resources. The vocational courses mentioned above include classes in mechanics, reading and interpretation of mechanical drawings and electronics. In addition, the Metallurgist Union in Belo Horizonte and Contagem-MG maintained a Metallurgist Cultural Institute from 1977 to 1987. It held elementary school classes, as well as courses in general mechanics, typing, tailoring and sewing. Currently, this labour union holds courses in turning, mechanical adjustment, general mechanics and interpretation of industrial drawing, with approxiamtely 40 students attending each classes.

Today, these two workers' organisations participate in discussions with alternative vocational schools with the objective of implementing courses of instruction in the use of new technologies. On a regional basis, the Secretariado de Formaçao da CUT (Secretariat of Training - CUT/MG) has been considering establishing an agreement with the Centro de Aperfeiçoamento do Trabalhador - CAT (Workers' Professional Improvement Centre), with the aim of redirecting its facilities to the needs of apprenticeship generated by new technologies. This idea is related to the modernisation of CAT's equipment to make it a pioneering, pilot project in Brazil dealing with CUT's professional courses.

In the opinion of the Secretariat of Training - CUT/MG, workers' organisations must intervene in vocational training as directly as pos-

sible, always being concerned about the introduction, through technical training, of elements of politics which enable each person to be aware of the dimension of the working world and the prospects for improvement of individual fulfilment and quality of life.

In CUT's opinion, the proposal for vocational training in Brazil "should presuppose the resolution of content and methods, to allow workers to become conscious and free agents in the labour market and not only executors of machine appliances"[7]. It seeks not only the apprenticeship for new techniques and technologies, but also the development of a critical spirit, as well as class and union consciousness directing concrete action for social transformation.

In this sense, any vocational training project must bring in a political dimension opposed to employer domination: "It is fundamentally necessary to enable students to communicate and make a critical analysis of society, by means of removing them from isolation, from a feeling of incompetence and failure, and bringing them a better self-image, as well as making them completely aware of the elements which are now being presented in a fragmentary and insignificant way"[8]. This proposal also contains a concern about the introduction of technological changes, pointing to the need for information/ training, especially in the electrical-electronic and mechanical areas.

According to the person responsible for CUT's training in Brazil, their "strategy is based on an effort to make solidarity overcome class and reach the international dimension". With this objective, CUT plans to seek financial and technical as well as methodological support, when the shortage of resources in the union movement's institutes makes the implementation of vocational courses impossible. However, this desired solidarity has come up against obstacles because the Western Europe Union Movement is directing its resources to Eastern Europe. That means that the vocational training projects promoted by CUT have been stopped, waiting for international resources.

V. "Alternative" vocational training organisations

In the last twenty years, some vocational training initiatives developed by segments of the working classes have been shown to be more significant than those of workers' organisations. They seem more important than union initiatives primarily because they introduce activities and teaching which are apparently more advanced than those of employer-led institutions such as SENAI or courses administered through workers' organisations which are not concerned about developing creative and apprenticeship abilities in their workers. As for workers' organisation initiatives in this area, there are but few worker-educator groups. However, the groups always keep in contact, by organising periodical meetings and seminars in which they exchange experiences and discuss methodologies and objectives. During their 1989 meeting, in Rio de Janeiro, they even founded a Conselho de Educação Operária (Workers' Educational Council) which was given the responsibility for organising follow-up seminars and seeking greater interrelationship among all their experiences, as well as working on the creation of a global financial policy for schools.

The schools that have been participating in the workers' education seminars are:

a) CADTS - Centro de Aprendizagem e Desenvolvimento Técnico- Social (Centre of Technical and Social Apprenticeship and Development), situated in São João do Meriti, Rio de Janeiro state.

b) CAT - Centro de Aperfeiçoamento do Trabalhador (Workers' Apprenticeship Centre), situated in Betim, Minas Gerais state.

c) AST - Ação Social Técnica Escola de Produção Tio Beijo (Technical Social Service - Tio Beijo School of Production), situated in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais state.

d) COPRE - Centro Operário Recreativo Profissionalizante (Workers' Recreational and Professionalization Centre), situated in Contagem, Minas Gerais state.

e) APJ - Aprender Produzir Juntos (Learn How to Produce Together), situated in Teófilo Otoni, Minas Gerais state.

f) CTC - Centro de Trabalho e Cultura (Cultural and Working Centre), situated in Recife, Pernambuco state.

g) Escola Nova Piratininga (Nova Piratininga School), situated in São Paulo, São Paulo state.

The main points that guide the work developed in such schools are related to the training of a worker as a whole, responsible for his actions at work and in life. These schools consider that governmental and employers' educational institutions develop their work based on a unifying concept which aims for the production of a labour force composed of individuals who will be fulfilled in their work. This perception will naturally be a determining factor in the material being taught and in the teaching methodologies used by these schools. Among its objectives, CADTS, for example, suggests creating community service stations where it is situated (Baixada Fluminense) an area which is characterised by the poverty and violence of a dormitory-suburb on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. This area supplies Rio de Janeiro with workers, but its unemployment rates are very high. Illiteracy and diseases typical of poor regions are also among the highest in Brazil.

CADTS's experience began with production and apprenticeship following the same route, through the creation of a workshop-school where agricultural equipment and tools for the

construction industry were made. Great importance is given to history classes. The teaching of technical skills and the history of labour occur side by side. The history of technology is always linked to the special features of the courses being taken by students. Therefore, in the electronics course, the history of electricity in Brazil is also taught including the coming of the electricity companies to Brazil and their relations with the government, the crisis of the electrical energy sector and the strikes which take place in this sector - in short, everything which is an object for study in the area of relations between society and the field of work chosen by the student. This includes research on living conditions, ways in which electricity serves the population, the foreign debt issue and disorganised urbanisation and its relations with the interests of society. In the turning course, training consists of the history of labour and technology, the invention of the lathe and its use in industry, the Industrial Revolution and transformation of the working class, the state of factories at present and how workers would like them to be.

The CAT (Centro de Aperfeiçoamento do Trabalhador) - Workers' Apprenticeship Centre - is situated close to a FIAT automobile plant and was formed by workers from local plants, specially FIAT, KRUPP and FMB. These workers were dismissed during the 1979 strike. Many of the group of workers who founded the CAT, had experience in vocational courses. The idea of creating a workshop school would allow them to keep a working contract, so they could go on being affiliated to the union in Betim. Since this union was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, the workers wanted to organise a "party" to run for elections. To do so, they had to be employed and they therefore became CAT's workers in the workshop school. In the beginning, the production (tools sold to local industry) supported the school. As they were going through economic difficulties, the Italian unions limited their financial help to the training of union staff at this school. Today, staff training for the union struggle is undertaken by the Escola Sindical 7 de Outubro[9] and the CAT. While facing obstacles to their work continuing, such institutes have been discussing the directions they should take. Among many proposals, they have been considering restarting vocational training through an agreement with the Metallurgist Union of Betim. During the period in which it was run as a vocational training school, the CAT trained more than five hundred workers as turners, automobile electricians, hydraulic mechanics and on-site installers. In 1989, CAT ceased functioning due to lack of financial resources, but still received more than 1,000 requests from persons interested in training for a profession. As the CAT never publicised its activities, this demand can be interpreted as a clear sign of the need for vocational training in the region, as well as a sign of the acceptance and fame won by the school and disseminated by its ex-students. The educational methods used by CAT reflect the view that technical competence is linked to the struggle for better working conditions, a standpoint which does not arise in the present vocational schools directed either by the employers or the government.

It is considered essential to give the necessary tools to the students, where the processes of social communication and critical analysis of society are concerned, so that they can position themselves as citizens and as workers who are able to reach fullfilment as human beings.

The AST (Ação Social Técnica Escola de Produção Tio Beijo) - Technical Social Service: Tio Beijo School of Production) - has a slightly different origin from CAT's, but is also linked to forms of community mobilisation and organisation as it is situated in the industrial zone of Belo Horizonte. Similarly, its founders had experiences of strikes and as factory workers. But the role played by the Bairro Lindéia (Lindéia neighborhood), through its Association, in the struggle for schools, transportation, water and other urban services was fundamental to the creation of vocational courses given at the neighborhood church, back in the 70's. Those courses, primarily directed towards occupations in the metallurgical area, were given to adolescents during the day and to adults in the evening. At "Tio Beijo", discussions about the conditions of factory workers were part of

the teaching activities. The methodology developed in the AST aims at enabling the student to face a problem as whole. For example, when a piece of metal is being turned, the SENAI instructors not only teach the student the techniques involved in this job, but also give him a lathe-working programme. In the AST, the student has to develop this programme, while making use of his imagination and creativity, as well as seeking solutions to problems in his work. Such an educational approach aims at training professionals who are more involved in their work. In the AST apprenticeship process, work is developed in groups to stimulate contact among workers and so help them find solutions to common problems. Individual proposals are taken to the whole group for discussion. Creativity is highly valued, and the act of production is associated with the relations existing in the factory and in the production process.

According to the founders of the AST experience, the difficulties encountered by young people of the Lindéia District trying to enter the SENAI schools are among the reasons for the implementation of the project. According to their report, the SENAI seats were occupied by children of foremen sent by various enterprises. Another reason for the project, when it first began, was the idea of developing leadership, not only in the district, but also inside the factories. Therefore, besides having its attention clearly directed to the training of leaders in the field of production competence, the AST concerns are inevitably associated with political competence. The starting point of the AST experience lies in the strong criticism about the kinds of courses available up to that time and the lack of support from the government which did not offer an educational process appropriate to the needs of the metallurgical workers. An important characteristic of the AST experience is the discussion of ideas, directed to all levels, about training in democratic ideals. This can be easily explained as the AST experience was first started in 1978 under the military government. There is a newspaper at the school, run by students and ex- students who are now union directors. Currently, about 150 students are attending courses on lathe-working, joinery, carpentry and electrical circuitry.

The COPRE (Centro Operário Recreativo Professionalizante - Workers' Recreational and Professionalisation Centre) has been operating for 14 years, without the help of any entity, supporting itself through monthly payments made by the students and the production of its workshop. Courses on electrical circuitry, soldering, tacking and welding, as well as classes on how to become a locksmith were given during those 14 years in the COPRE. Nowadays, however, only the welding course is being offered. Located in the industrial zone of Contagem, COPRE has had its scope of action reduced as it has not kept up with technological modernisation, making it difficult for its production to be competitive in the market place.

The APJ (Aprender Produzir Juntos - Learn How to Produce Together) is located in Teófilo Otoni, northeastern Minas Gerais, and is involved in the instruction of a common local activity: the production of precious and semi-precious stones through its lapidiary course. Founded six years ago, the APJ systematically introduced other courses, such as tailoring, industrial mechanics, and so on, amounting to a total of ten skill sectors. The APJ has already trained 180 professionals. Relying on the help of the local Church, the APJ cultivates the idea of people entering a profession without the concept of a boss: the idea is neither to have a boss, nor to be one.

The CTC (Centro de Trabalho e Cultura - Cultural and Working Centre) from Recife was created in 1967. After its first three years, during which a structured plan of discussions was conducted, a programme of training based on the study of the history of society was developed and a book was written about it. When the vocational training courses were started, the CTC focus centred on politics related to technology and production, while discussions were part of the classes. The vocational courses now train students on how to become welders, industrial locksmiths, mechanical fitters, pneumatic experts and in-

dustrial electricians. In addition, there are courses on electronics and typographics. These last a whole year and are offered in the afternoon (to adolescents) and at night (to adult workers). The CTC working philosophy can be summarised as follows: to give an experience of production, of knowledge and of social organisation, in which the worker, here and now, lives in another kind of social relationship. This experience is intended to develop vocational training processes which encourage workers to reason and which help them understand the scientific aspects of their occupations, such as maths and physics in the techniques of mechanical drawing, etc., demystifying the superiority of the technicians' knowledge. It also seeks the creation of new ventures where workers: a) can collectively exercise power, while developing their autonomy, solidarity, self-confidence and confidence in companions; b) can democratically participate in discussions; and c) are encouraged to become involved in discussions about the conditions which will offer a better quality of life to all of them. The CTC has won recognition and many people turn to it for its technical quality. In the pneumatic and electronics course, many people attend classes just to become specialised. In the electricity course, young people accept the political aspect because they want the vocational training - therefore, they "swallow" the films and speechs directed at union opposition. With such an objective, they suggested a sequence of discussions on more than 50 themes. Among them, are union history, the CUT and CGT, and the history of tools. Just like the other schools, the CTC has been going through economic difficulties and has been seeking help from international institutions, such as CEBEMO (from the Netherlands), so as not to be obliged to eliminate its courses. Through a long series of discussions, the CTC concluded that it is impossible to support themselves financially. There are more than 1,500 people who have already benefitted from the courses being offered at the CTC.

The Nova Piratininga School has its origin in the political initiative of the Metallurgical Union Opposition in Sao Paulo. The students attend the Nova Piratininga School compulsorily being sent there by unions, pastoral workers, the Catholic Working Youth, etc. Courses lasting ten months are offered in electricity, lathe-working, quality control and mechanical adjustment. All of the students take a total of 300 hours in classes and 340 in the workshop. The classes on Political and Union Training are provided by militants of the OSM-SP (Metallurgical Union Opposition) and by the Movimento Sindicalista (Union Movement). The Nova Piratininga School also opens its courses to adolescents, mainly children of militant union members. The courses try to develop apprenticeships with a questioning approach, but the oldest among the adolescents always look for an answer which has already been given by someone, as a consequence of the education they have received at official schools.

Although the Nova Piratininga School has emerged from the Metallurgical Union Opposition, they now try to think of becoming a school directed not only by the OSM, but also by the institutes that refer students, transforming it into a training school. The approach used is to give training mainly for the workers struggle, and vocational training is seen as a necessity for accomplishing the students' other objectives. The precept is that each one attending the Nova Piratininga School "should be a seed inside the factory". Therefore, they try to develop a new vocational approach, different from doctrinal training which also questions the separation between the professional and the politician, and integrates the two. In addition, there is a night school for those who are already working and who are trying to improve their abilities. There are also pre-professional courses for the unskilled, all directed to organisation in the work place. The course for adolescents, who are children of militants, is a new field where the experience of militancy itself is questioned. The militant father does not frequently profess at home what he proclaims outside, which sometimes transforms him into an oppressor, almost always absent. Due to his being militant and getting involved in strikes, this father is frequently unemployed, giving others a negative image of

himself, an image of a man who could not succeed in life. The course for teenagers tries to open new professional frontiers, giving them several experiences while demystifying science as means of domination.

According to one of the school's co-ordinators, "the greatest difficulty in training people through the union workers themselves is that the union has not been encouraging people to enrol in vocational training". As a consequence, the financial support now being given to the courses is precarious. There is no money for new courses able to keep up with the technological modernisation taking place in Brazil.

VI. Conclusion

When considering the Brazilian union movement, represented by its three major political union centres (CUT, CGT, FORÇA SINDICAL), we can conclude that the prospects of vocational training are presented as follows:

- Vocational training is fundamentally a governmental duty.

- Political education is considered to be a priority, in terms of strategic action.

- The union movement would be willing to invest in vocational training on two conditions: that they could obtain resources for their objectives and that the political dimension would be linked to the technical dimension.

- Limited vocational training experience in the union movement, and the projects now being developed (at governmental level and/or with the international union movement), as well as "alternative" experiences of vocational training do not have, nor are intended to have the objective of competitive vocational training. This situation can be explained not only by budgetary difficulties, but also by the fact that the union movement does not intend to train the labour force for enterprises.

- The end of both the union tax and the investment of resources made by the European union movement which is in the process of restructuring workers' organisations in Eastern Europe have tended to precipitate a crisis. The solutions depend upon unification of the budgetary system, rationalisation of equipment uses, sharing of infrastructure and even the merger of unions. This state of crisis is one cause of the inadequate incentives for vocational training.

- The present crisis of the Brazilian state, with its clear impact on wage conditions (miminum salary = US$100.00), determines the priorities of the Brazilian union movement, which is still characterised by a struggle for the workers' survival.

- The increasingly rapid introduction of technological change in enterprises which then have to improve internal systems for deployment of their labour forces to operate new equipment places the struggle for employment as one of the main challenges to the union movement. On the other hand, it confirms that, despite these changes the enterprises do not have sufficient resources to acquire this new equipment.

- In Brazil, illiteracy remains an obstacle to vocational training.

- The Brazilian union movement cannot be considered as united. It is composed of unions representing different ideological factions[10] which are even opposed to each other. In this scenario, the position of the union movement as far as vocational training is concerned, can be summarised as follows:

1. The Brazilian union movement is not against vocational training.

2. The "unionism of confrontation" in Brazil encourages political education, making it a priority and preventing any kind of association with the government/entrepreneurs in the field of vocational training.

3. The Brazilian "result-oriented unionism" also encourages political instruction, but considers vocational training as one of its priorities. It also relates to the government and employers' as to amount of resources devoted to vocational training.

4. The "unionism of confrontation", as well as "result-oriented unionism" have been linked to the international union movement in the obtaining of resources to permit a project for technical and political teaching.

Brazil is under an intense process of change, as far as the regulation of labour relations is concerned. There is now a project in Congress dealing with collective bargaining and profit distribution in enterprises. Such a project can bring new orientations to the present "status quo" of the vocational training issue, from the union movement's point of view.

A conflict is developing throughout the salaried class as a consequence of technological innovations being introduced. This still nascent conflict between the qualified and the un-qualified groups ("I won't teach what I know, because that's what guarantees my job") has shown signs of growing. However, it is still not clear to the union movement that, in this case, it could possibly consider vocational training as a positive strategy.

The real vocational training experiences within the unions in Brazil do not represent, in their essence, an expanding political project for the Brazilian Union Centres. The present position of vocational training in Brazil, derived from the accumulated experiences which are historically significant, is defined, on the one hand, by the government and employers' (SENAI and SENAC) and, on the other, by what we call "alternative" experiences linked, in general, to the Church and to district associations. We can conclude that vocational training is not just a technical option, but also a distinctively political choice. It can determine the level of investment by incorporating technical and vocational dimensions into the daily routine and practices of the Brazilian union movement.

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